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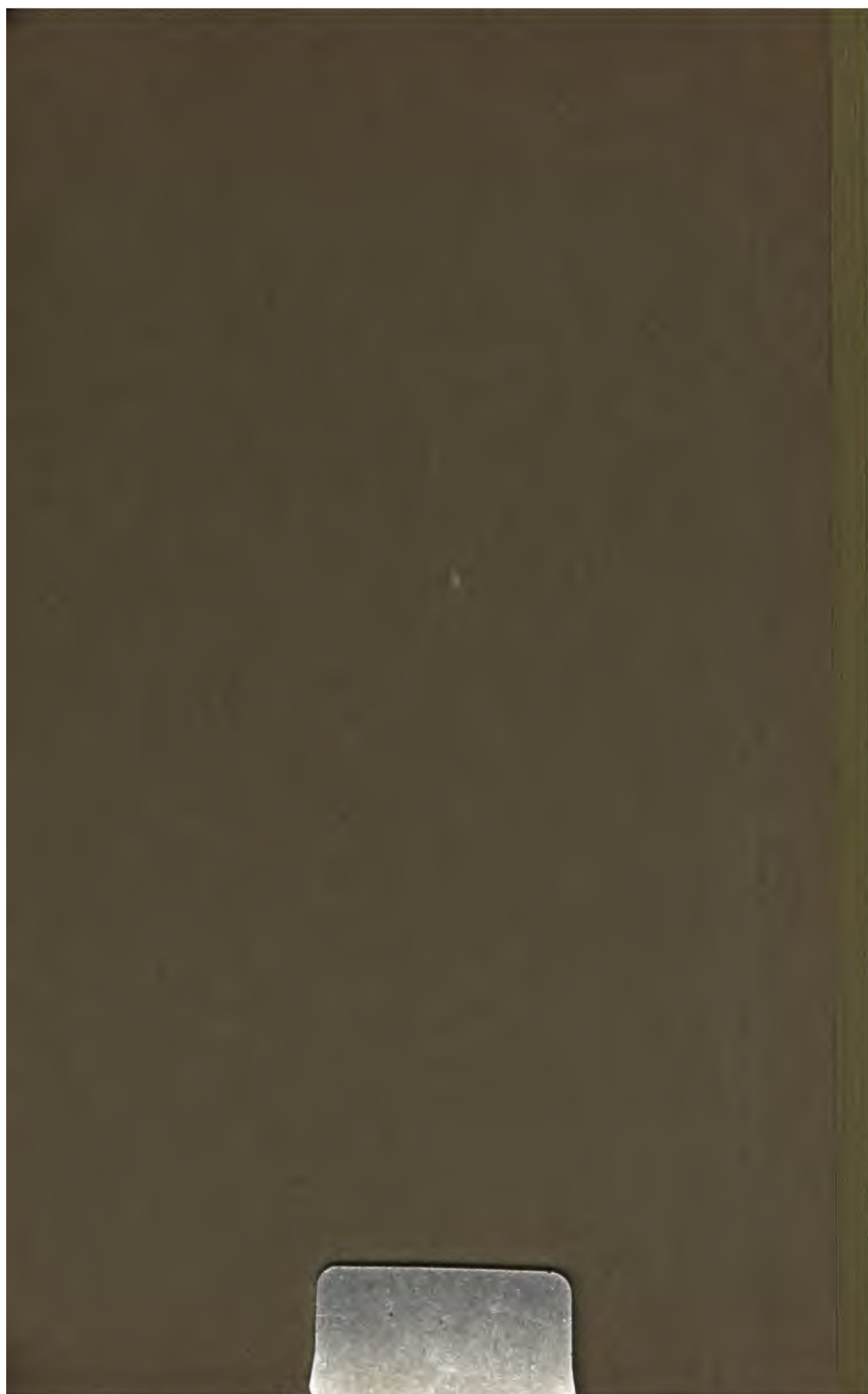
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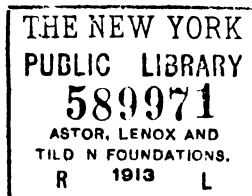
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*To*  
*The American People*





# AN INAUGURAL ODE



UNDER this banner of ours,  
unfurled  
To the winds of the world,  
We, by God's grace, Citizens, Sovereigns,  
lords of this land,  
Seeking a man among men,  
Fixing on you for our choice  
Once again,  
Give you, this day, high place.  
And the nation's voice,—  
With a solemn roar  
Like the murmur of wind in the trees,  
With the might of the surge of the seas  
As they break on the shore,—  
Gives unto you, to command  
Over our armies of peace,  
And over our servants, who stand  
At watch in the house.

Solemn and mutual vows  
    We make this day;  
To defend our fair temple of state,  
To protect the pure spirit of laws,  
    To watch 'and to pray  
Against treason, within and without:  
    Within,—for the fate  
Of all our unborn generations  
    Hangs on these vows we make:  
    Without,—for our cause,  
    And this oath which you take,  
Are the promise of peace to the nations.  
    For our war,  
Is the fight against war,  
    And our strife  
Is the struggle of right against wrong,  
The battle of youth with doubt,  
    Of life with death.  
    And our song  
Is the battle shout

Of a mighty army of peace;  
The living breath  
Of new-born harmonies,  
That shall be sung  
In every human tongue.

This is the oath you take,  
As you take up the fight against wrong:  
To defend,  
Even unto the end,  
This, our cause; this, the creed  
We confess;  
That Justice and Mercy endure,  
With righteousness:  
And naught else is sure,—  
And naught less!  
And the promised land shall belong  
Not to the strong  
But the meek, and to them who are pure  
In heart and in deed.

Though men say  
These are dreams, foolish dreams;  
Though the way  
Through the desert still seems  
Blind, perilous, wearily, endlessly long;  
Nay!  
Though the very dust, that we raise  
With our feet on the long trodden ways,  
Shuts out all the light of our days;  
Are we lost then, indeed!  
Shall no leader be found, in our need!  
Is this then our life, evermore to rehearse  
Those tales that are told  
Of the people of old,  
Who were faithless, perverse,  
And worshipped strange gods, which they  
wrought  
With the work of their hands!

Oh ye,  
Ye who have climbed the heights and sought  
The Lord's commands,  
The table of that law which sets us free,  
And, coming from the mountain, as of old  
Have found our god a beast, and made of gold,  
Lead us onward still!  
Give us strength that we,  
Out of our very weakness and our fears,  
Make strong our will!  
That these weak hands of ours may yet fulfil  
The promise of the years;  
And seize that kingdom, which by the Lord's  
decree  
Is ours to win; that country you behold  
From lonely mountain heights, remote and  
cold!



Shall we, whose fathers dared to smite  
From off their limbs and lives  
Those galling gyves,  
Forged in the night  
Of Egypt's darkness, and fled  
That ancient tyranny  
Of warring kings, shall we not arise,  
And cast from our eyes  
The subtle spell that blinds our sight,  
And, from our hearts, those ancient lies,  
False visions of some far off paradise;  
Those fetters of the soul that stay our might;  
Those flesh-pots of the mind; that wandering  
light  
Which leads where no true hills of promise  
rise!  
So shall we see,  
When the true vision is at last revealed,  
This is our portion in that promised land:

A sacred soil, to till; a place to stand  
Against the Philistines; a battle field,  
Where we must fight and fall; yea, hand in  
hand,  
Fight on, to fall again,—but never yield.

Since we have shunned the shadows that are  
cast  
Upon the air, mirages of the sky;  
Since now at last  
The long, long dreary desert space is past;  
Shall we in very madness, drunk with pride,  
Set up base gods on high  
Within the market place!  
Or, seeking grace  
To guide,  
And kneeling down, each man upon his hearth,  
Search for the living laws, where still they lie,  
Scattered like seeds in the earth,

Till the children of men,  
Toiling beneath the sun,  
Shall raise them up again,  
One by one,  
As by a second birth,  
And make them whole at last!

Now no more, as of old,  
Does the dust of our striving by day  
Blind the sight of our eyes,  
Nor shut out the light of the sun  
Ere the day's work is done.  
For the wind of the Lord blows behind us,  
and loud  
Is the sound of it;  
And as it was writ,  
And the tale thereof told,  
See, the columns of dust that arise  
Are become as a pillar of cloud  
In the skies,  
To point out the way.

And behold,  
When we gaze straight before us  
Through these whirlwinds of dust,  
And no longer look back on our track,  
In a breath  
The dark years of the desert are past,  
And the shadows of death.  
And the land  
Of our hope is at hand;  
Which the Lord shall restore us,  
He in whom is our trust.

And our cup shall run o'er  
In the day of our need,  
And He shall restore  
And make whole,  
In us and our seed,  
The great living soul  
Of the teeming  
World, ever dreaming  
Of things that are to be.

These are the things we must do  
To be constant and true  
To our vow.  
So, here and now,  
We bid you stand,  
Stand and receive the sacred oath,—to protect  
This fair temple of ours, which was planned  
Through the ages of ages,  
By the mind of the One  
Great Architect;  
This dream of the prophets and sages,  
By whom the fair work was begun;  
This house which was made  
By men's toil,  
And the work of their hands,  
Here under the sun;  
This temple, which stands  
As a refuge for men of all nations:  
Whose strong foundations  
Forever firm are laid

In the free soil  
Of the fertile earth,  
And in every heart, on every hearth,  
Where'er still burn the sacred fires  
Of liberty and brothers' love.  
And this living wall  
Shall never move,  
These lofty towers  
Shall never fall,  
But by our guilt,  
And to our scathe.  
For behold, they are built  
Of the blood of our sons and our brothers,  
And the faith  
Of our mothers;  
And their glorious strength ever rests  
In the graves of our sires,  
And in our daughters' breasts.

So this temple of ours,  
Which was made  
For a refuge for men,  
Has become as a house of the Lord.  
So twice was it saved by the sword  
Of our fathers, who fell  
In faith's fierce endeavor,  
That we, coming after, might dwell  
Therein, unafraid,  
With goodness and mercy forever.





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